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AUTHOR Hurley, Rodney G.
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ABSTRACT

Five articulation studies to be performed by the Florida Community Junior College Inter-Institutional Research Council are discussed. The studies are: General Description of Student Characteristics--A Transfer Student Profile; Upper Dividion Performance of Community College Students Grouped by Level of Florida Transfers by Majors and in Core Courses in Majors; Retention of Students in Lower Divisions in Florida Public Universities and Community Colleges and in Upper Division of Universities; and Academic Success of the Graduates of Three Florida Public Universities in Post-Baccalaureate Study. (DB)

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THE PROGRAM OF ARTICULATION FOR FLORIDA'S PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Rodney G. Hurley
Tallahassee Community College

JC 740 385

Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the
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THE PROGRAM OF ARTICULATION FOR FLORIDA'S PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

One of the most notable developments in higher education in the United States in recent years has been the growth of community colleges, both in number and in enrollment. These enrollment gains in Florida's community colleges had been foreseen by the state's educational planners and, consequently, four of the six public universities established since 1960 are upper divisional offering programs at the junior-senior level only. At the same time that these upper division institutions were being established, ceilings were placed on the lower division enrollments in the four-year universities, thereby setting the stage for future enrollment gains in the public community colleges of Florida.

As the 1970's began, more than 50 percent of the nearly 40,000 students enrolled in upper division study in the state universities had community college origins. Even though this student enrollment mix dramatically illustrates the feasibility of the two tier system of public higher education in Florida, a multifaceted problem of effecting a smooth articulation each year for thousands of persons into upper division study was created for institutional and state administrators alike.

Articulation between the two sectors of higher education would be a difficult enough process were there no factor other than the sheer numbers of community college students entering the universities. Institutional differences at both levels of education, student differences, and program differences, especially at the upper division level, extend the problems of articulation.

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The Articulation Agreement between Public Community Colleges and Public Universities in the State of Florida, revised and adopted in 1971, Section 11, Part a, directs a coordinating committee to "establish the priority to be given research conducted cooperatively by the Division of Community Colleges and the Division of Universities in conjunction with individual institutions. Such research will be encouraged and will be conducted in the areas such as admissions, grading practices, curriculum design, and follow-up of transfer students".

In following the mandate of these provisions of the agreement, the Division of Community Colleges and the Division of Universities actively began to initiate and plan for a program of articulation research for Florida's public institutions of higher education in a meeting of divisional representatives in December 1972. Subsequently, tentative descriptions of suggested articulation studies were formulated by the two divisions with intentions of having institutional representatives from the public universities and community colleges to come together to discuss the feasibility of such studies.

On April 17, 1972, in Tallahassee, Florida, representatives from seven of the state universities and fifteen of the community colleges met to react, comment and make suggestions and recommendations about aspects of the proposed studies. The results of this meeting were reviewed and the suggestions were incorporated into a proposal for funds to theFlorida Department of Education. The proposal was approved for funding and given a starting date of June 15, 1972.

ARTICULATION DEFINED

Before describing the articulation studies, it is necessary to understand the use and definition of the term "articulation" as it is referred to in the studies. The most common usage of the concept of articulation in education today is that of a collection of statements and criteria which allows a student to pass from one

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institution to another institution. On the surface, articulation, operationally defined as a process, embodies the notion of jointedness or connectedness. However, as one assesses the nature of articulation in education a set of multidimensional characteristics emerge reflecting the attitudes, philosophies, and politics of the institutions, educational systems, state agencies, and legislatures toward education.

Articulation has received widespread attention recently, but very few attempts have been made to comprehensively investigate the concept. Perhaps articulation can be best understood by isolating its components. Therefore, for these studies, articulation is defined as a "flow" from one institution to another and as an "acceptability" of the product which flows.

The dimension of flow can be thought of as a linear relationship between two or among more than two types of institutions. In this concept, the major characteristic of flow is the delivery system (types of institution). There exists the possibility of a multiplicity of relationships given more than one type of institution.

The delivery system can then be examined as to its nature, composition, and purpose. In such an investigation, the domains for each type of institution become apparent. Herein, a mutually exclusive delivery system may not be guaranteed nor evident since possible overlaps in the domains of institutions can exist. These overlaps seldom enhance the flow of students across institutions.

Acceptability can be explained as a quadratic relationship between institutions and is more relevant when one talks about the conditions of acceptability. It is observable that acceptability is directly related to the conditions which determine the direction in which and/or the degree to which institutional products are received across institutions. It is also perceivable that conditions of acceptability

reflect attitudes of the institutions toward each other and concomitantly dictate the continuum for acceptance of the product within and across delivery systems.

Figure 1 depicts schematically the construct of articulation as defined in the terms of "flow" and "acceptability".

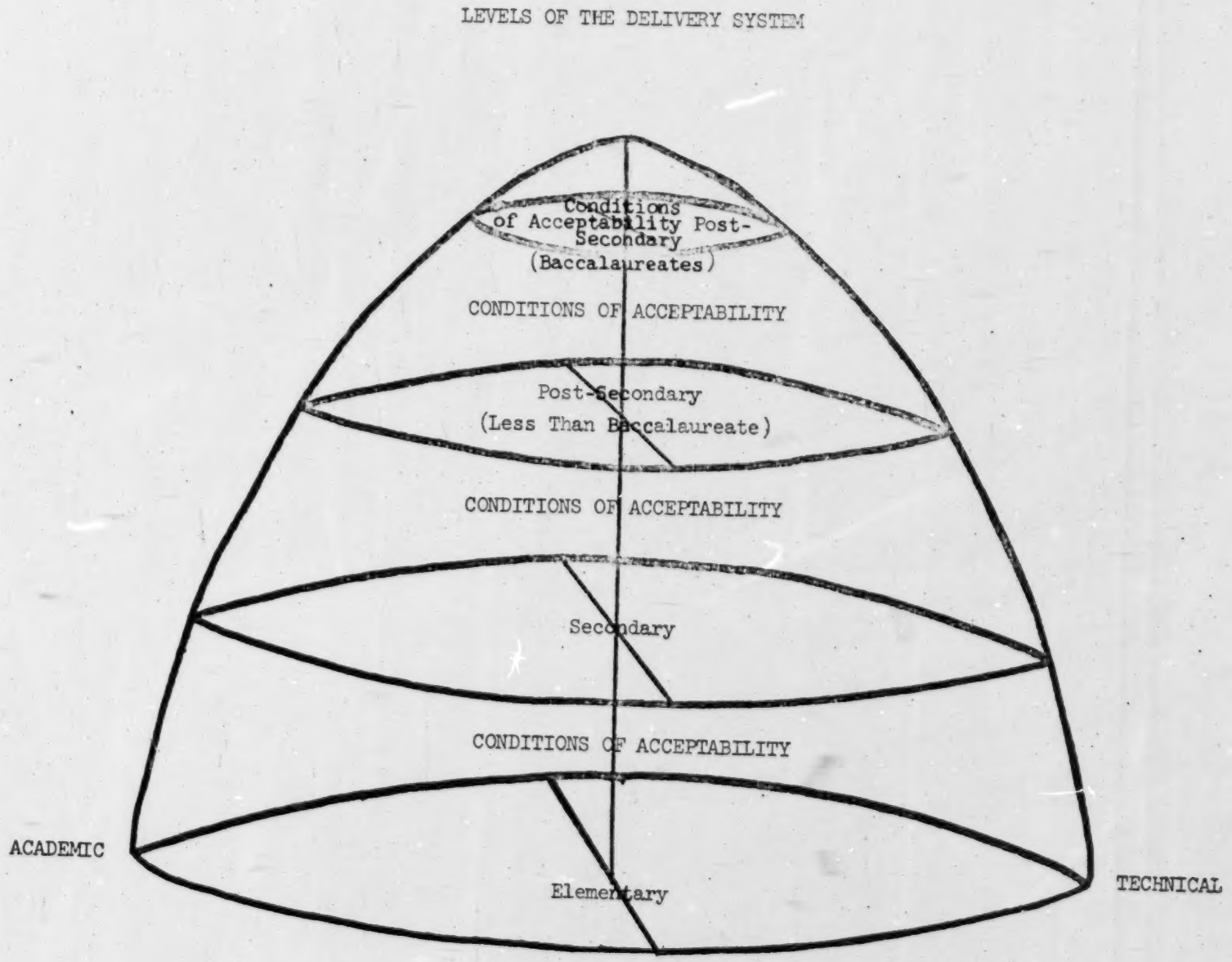
As can be seen in Figure 1, there are certain conditions which are necessary to be fulfilled before a product from an institution can even get into the sphere of articulation. That is, there are certain conditions of acceptability which must be met before a student can leave an institution and be classified as acceptable. Once in the flow aspect of articulation, there are other conditions which must be met before a student can move to another institution. It is further apparent from Figure 1 that there are many possible combinations of conditions and institutions which will allow a student to move from one institution to another. Of course, there are some combinations which are possible but not reasonable. In many instances there are definite directional flows and sets of conditions of students from one institution to another, but the same path in reverse order may have no conditions of acceptability whatsoever.

The concept or idea of a smooth articulation then becomes a function of the explicit statements of conditions of acceptability as a student flows from one institution to another. The State of Florida has shown its commitment to the concept of smooth articulation not only through this Articulation Agreement between Public Community Colleges and Public Universities but also by funding the above mentioned proposed studies in articulation research.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDIES

As provided for in the proposal, an advisory committee comprised of representatives from the Commissioner of Education's staff, the Division of Universities, the Division of Community Colleges, and the public institutions of higher education

Figure 2. Schematic of "Flow" and "Acceptability" Components of Articulation.



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in Florida was established. Under their direction, the research design and methodology for each of the five studies was structured. They were given a priority order for undertaking in the fiscal year 1973. Upon completion of the design and methodology the Florida Community Junior College Inter-Institutional Research Council was contracted with to conduct the studies under the guidance and direction of the Advisory Committee.

General Description of Student Characteristics - A Transfer Student Profile

This study is designed primarily to compile and aggregate descriptive statistics by (1) community college of origin, (2) university, (3) college in university, (4) major, and (5) class level for all transfer students in the public universities through the Fall Quarter 1971. The following data elements are to be included in the profile:

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Race
4. Number of credit hours transferred to the university
5. Number of credit hours earned at the university
6. Cumulative grade-point average at the university.

Upper Division Performance of Community College Students Grouped by Level of Florida Twelfth-Grade Test Total Score

A discriminate analysis (BMD04M) on two groups of transfer students will be performed as follows: (1) by community college, (2) by university, and (3) by major. In each case two groups will be designated: grade-point average 2.0 and higher and grade-point average less than 2.0. The Florida Twelfth-Grade Total Test Score will be used as the discriminate variable. It is expected that performance, indicated by grade-point average, may associate with levels of the Florida Twelfth-Grade Test.

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Academic Performance of Community College Transfers by Majors and In Core Courses in Majors

This study is predicated on the lack of knowledge of performance of community college transfers within different major fields in the universities. It is felt that a study which would determine the mean grade-point average by major as well as by course required for those majors will identify areas where transfer students are having difficulty if such areas actually exist.

The grades of transfer students enrolled in the Universities will be grouped by major within institution. These data will be analyzed so that mean and standard deviations of grade point averages will be obtained. Further, the means and standard deviations of required courses for each major will be obtained.

Retention of Students in Lower Divisions in Florida Public Universities and Community Colleges and in Upper Division of Universities

This study is directed toward determining (1) the number of students who are retained through one academic year and (2) the number who are dismissed for academic reasons, placed on academic probation, and in academic difficulty (less than 2.0 GPA) in each program offered in the state universities of Florida.

Data for Fall 1971 - Spring 1973 terms will be merged into a common format. These records will be compared on the basis of persistence and academic dismissal as follows: (1) university, (2) major within university, and (3) community college of origin within major. Percentages will be calculated for the numbers of people in each of these categories and the Florida Twelfth-Grade Test Score means will be computed for each category.

Academic Success of the Graduates of Three Florida Public Universities in Post-Baccalaureate Study

This study will make a comparative analysis of the post-baccalaureate success of degree recipients who took their first two years at a community college with

that of degree recipients who entered the public universities for lower division study. The expected outcomes of the study are two: (1) evidence of the relative success of transfer students and native students at the graduate level; and (2) information concerning the nature of graduate programs of study selected by transfer students and native students.

The study will be confined to Florida State University, the University of Florida, and the University of South Florida.

DATA PROCEDURES

To obtain the necessary data to conduct these studies from all the institutions involved in hard copy form would be expensive, time consuming, impractical and would render the data obsolete before concluding the studies. The only viable alternative approach is to acquire from each of the institutions the data in tape form. Then using these tapes in a common format merge procedure, a master data file will be built to provide readily accessible information to be used in and according to the suggested analytical procedures for each of the studies. Figure 2 is a systems diagram of the data merge procedure.

Figure 2. System Diagram for Data Procedures.

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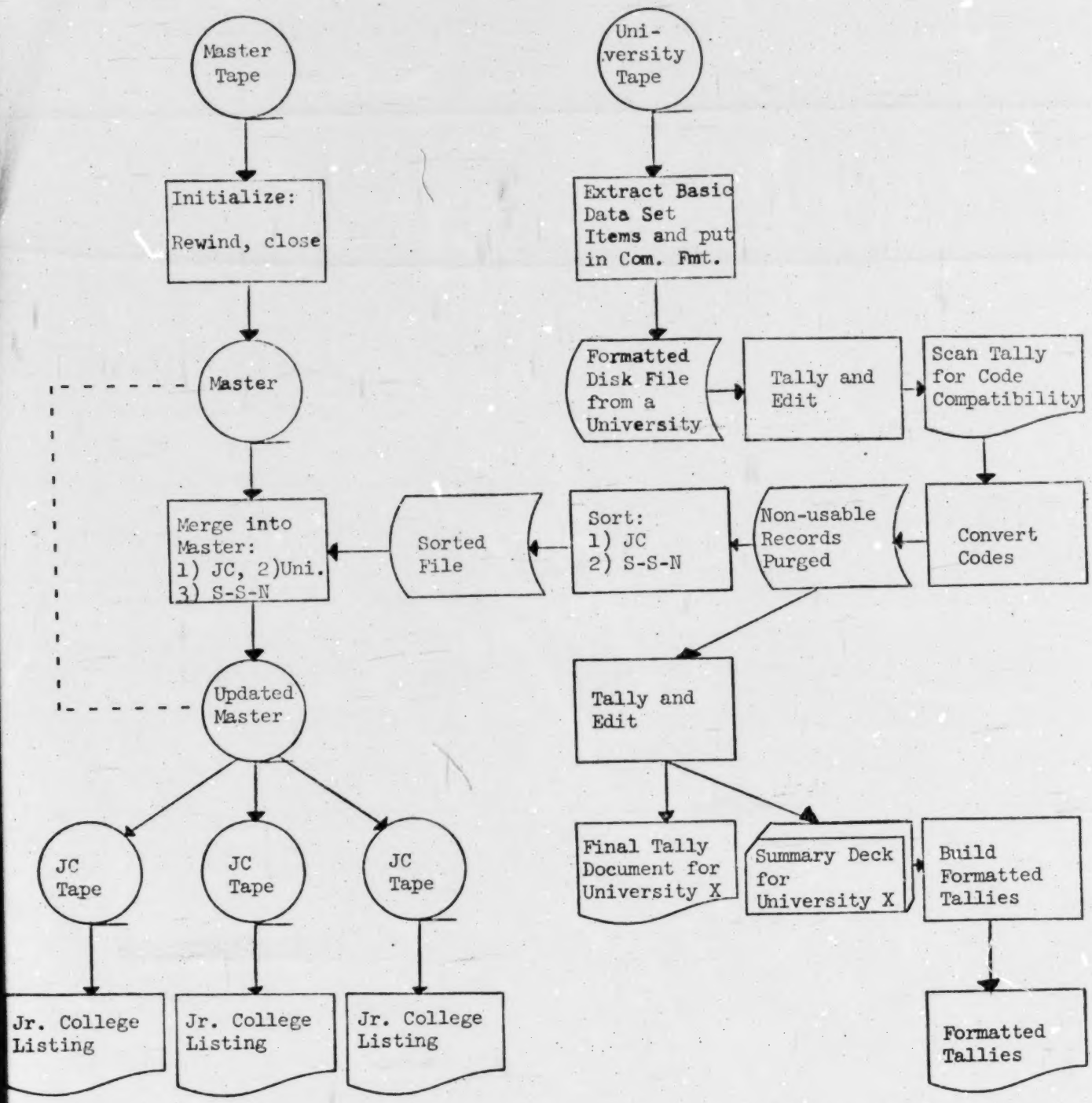

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